AIM

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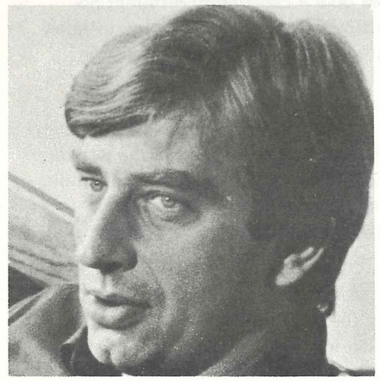
WE WILL CAMPAIGN

On September 3, 1968, AIM announced in a press conference the candidacy of Bob Cook for U.S. Representative from the Third Congressional District. At the conference a printed statement was distributed to newsmen, and Bob amplified some aspects of the statement for them. There follow excerpts from his remarks and from the printed news release.

Bob Cook: Remarks

This statement is in two parts, one of which is a general statement of our position on the various issues that we think are important, that we want to talk about during the campaign. We added a short statement about the Republicans and Democrats because we think people are interested in it, but we really consider the important thing in politics today to be the issues and problems facing people. In other words we want to play down the whole business of personalities, hoopla, sloganeering, and image politics, and play up the issues and problems facing the country today.

We stress that we are stating goals, not promises. We think they're goals that are in the interest of the American people but they're not something that I could implement - that I could bring about were I elected to Congress. In fact, they're not something that any candidate could bring about, but which are so far-reaching and so important that they can only be brought about by the work of large numbers of people. One of the things that we consider to be **the** central issue of the campaign is talking to people about the need for working together for change.



We take very seriously, as we say at the end, these words from the Declaration of Independence:

> "that it is the right of the people...to institute new government laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its power in such form that to them seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

That's essentially what we think is the situation in the country today -- that the institutions in which we've been working for a long time have reached the point where they no longer meet the needs of the people, that it is the obligation of the people to begin to build new institutions. We stress that AIM is **one** of these new institutions and organizations, but it is not the only one -- there are many other vehicles and many other ways of working towards these goals.

Another basic point is that we do not say these things because we think they're popular. In 1966 we talked about the Vietnam war because we thought it was a crucial issue facing the people then, not because we thought it was going to get a lot of votes. Today almost everybody is a peace candidate, not because they came out and opposed the war because they thought it was wrong, but because they saw the people were coming to oppose the war. We don't take these positions because we think they're popular but because we think they're right. We see that as our principle obligation -- to try to tell the truth about the roots of the crisis in America as directly as we can. And we think that the deepest truth in the long run **will** reach the greatest number of people.

"...Right now we have a system of socialism...for the rich, and free enterprise for the poor."

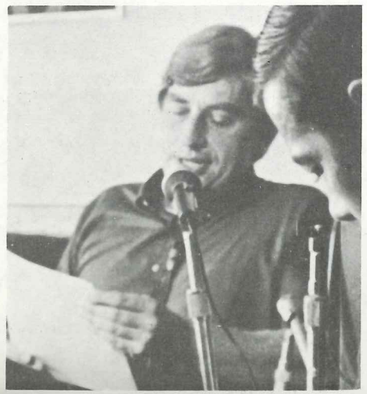
The third basic point is that we consider the underlying issue to be the question of the distribution of wealth and power in America today. That is, control of many people by a few people, control of the productive resources by a very small number of corporations, a very small number of families; maldistribution of income

where 20% of the people are getting almost half the income, where the poorest 20% are getting less than 5% of the income; and the whole question of power and control over resources, over our community, over our governments, over our universities and over our factories. We think this is the basic question which underlies all the issues.

Another point is the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. On this point we start from exactly the opposite direction from many people in the U.S. today. That is, we challenge the assumption that the U.S. has a right to be in Vietnam; we take the position that the United States has **no** right to be in Vietnam in the beginning, that the war was a tragic outcome of the control of the country by a very few people, and that the **only** solution to Vietnam is the immediate withdrawal of American troops. This means several things, by the way - - it means that we take a completely different position on who the heroes and villains are - - we consider the people in jail who have protested the war to be the heroes - they are political prisoners. The people who are running the war and who have run the war for some time, and who have said nothing- we consider them to be the real enemies of the people.

"...we consider the people in jail who have protested the war to be the heroes...."

We're in favor of the return of America's wealth and power to the working people. That means that we have to find new ways to bring corporations and the wealth under the control of the people -- that the basic resources of the country which have been exploited for private gain for a long time we believe belong to the people. We have to find a way of using these for basic social needs, for social purposes, as opposed to private gain. We simply don't think it makes sense any longer to take the vast productive facilities and natural resources and use them as a way of making a lot of money for individuals and for large corporations. Along with this, we oppose the welfare system and the whole idea of a guaranteed income because we believe that when there is a fair and reasonable distribution of wealth and power in the country then people will have and will create meaningful work for themselves out of the control of their resources an and will not have to depend on somebody else either handing them a welfare check or giving them some kind of job which they don't want and dont enjoy and which doesn't give them any opportunity to express themselves.



"Social justice for all citizens" is a statement which sums up our position on the whole question of racism in America and on the so-called issue of "law and order". We believe order flows out of justice and not out of police tactics and of the National Guard occupations. We believe only when there is social justice in the U.S. can we have law and order -- that it grows out of true communities and that true communities only exist where there is equality and respect among citizens. We therefore support the black Americans who are leading their people in the struggle for justice and we consider them, again, to be the true heroes. We think that the only reasonable position is that the black leaders who are in jail cannot have a fair trial given the current situation -- that they are political prisoners, they are heroes and they deserve to be free.

And finally we raise something that we think goes a long way beyond things that many other politicians talk about, that is, the right to live for the youth of America. We believe in the right of every individual to develop his full human potential, and we think that each individual life is something precious. We therefore oppose the kinds of things that destroy human life, especially young human life before it ever has a chance, such as the draft -- putting people in an army to go to kill and be killed. We also oppose the kind of totally inadequate medical care in the U.S. which

shortens so many peoples lives, which destroys their health before they even reach adulthood. We find that the destruction of our environment by the same corrupt system which sees profit as the only motivating force -- the pollution of our air, our water, the destruction of our natural resources is in effect destroying the future for young people. We think that a reasonable and rational society would make a completely differesnt system for allocation of its resources and priorities to insure the future of young people, and to make possible their real development and real fulfillment which we dont think is possible today. We think this is in many ways the basis of the revolt of youth and we think they're absolutely correct. We support the right of youth to share in making the decisions that are going to affect their lives, and affect their health and affect their future. Therefore we support the right of students to control the universities, colleges, schools, or to participate in the control of those, and we certainly support the right of eighteen year olds to vote.

Question: Mr. Cook, in your attack on the profit system and the call to return America's wealth and power to the working people, would you like to see the free enterprise system dismantled and replaced by another form of economic policy?

Answer: Let's put it this way, I think right now we have a system of socialism or state capitalism for the rich, and free enterprise for the poor. What I'm interested in doing is providing the same security for the bulk of the American people that is now provided for the very few and the very wealthy who control the resources. I'm also interested in talking about a different way of allocating our resources--that is, not on the basis of individual greed, but on the basis of the social needs of the American people. Until we begin to think that way about our immediate interest--that is, things like ending the war in Vietnam which I think is a social need of the American people; and about long range questions like the right of young people to live, I don't think we can begin to deal with them.

AIM - Bob Cook Statement

The goals of AIM and the Cook campaign are:

1. The return of America's wealth and power to the working people.

-The wealth of our country should be controlled by those who have worked to create it.

-A few giant corporations -- in the New Haven area, the banks and businesses like Macy's, Pratt & Whitney, Avco-Lycoming, Olin-Mathieson, and Sikorsky -- control the factories, the stores and the land. The profit system keeps the wealth and power in the hands of the corporations, and the universities and politicians they control. Politicians side with big business against the people: Rep. Giaimo, for instance, led a successful attack against the Dickey-Lincoln public power project because private utilities feared that a publicly-owned company would have lower rates.

-We oppose the welfare system and the idea of a guaranteed income. We oppose any plan that makes any American rely on a hand-out. We propose instead that the corporations be controlled by the people so that every American will have the constitutional right to a job that interests him and means more than just a pay-envelope.

2. The immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

-Only the Vietnamese have the right and the ability finally to decide how they shall live.

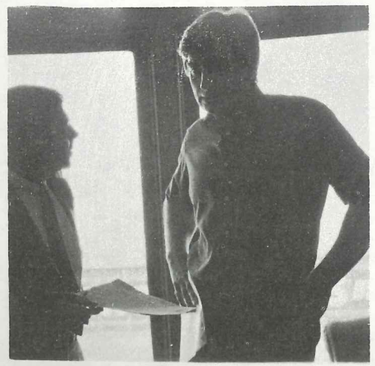
-American corporations, including many in the New Haven area, are making huge profits from this war, while the American people must pay with the lives of our young men and with higher prices and taxes.

-War industries in the New Haven area should be reconverted to producing for the needs of our people. Those who work in these factories, and those who live in our communities should decide together what to do with them so that no jobs will be lost.

3. Social justice for all citizens.

-Only when every American gets his just share of income, housing, medical care, education, recreation and the basic respect of his fellow man can we expect law and order.

-Americans of all races are denied these basic needs because the rich and the powerful determine our national priorities. In New Haven, for instance, whites, blacks and Puerto Ricans alike are pushed out of their homes, stores and neighborhoods by urban renewal projects such a as State Street and the Ring Road.



-We support community control by the people in our neighborhoods of urban renewal, schools, and other programs as a first step toward the real democracy we advocate. The Hill Neighborhood Corporation is an example of potentially successful neighborhood control.

-We support black Americans who are struggling for freedom and equal rights because their cause is just, and because only when they get their fair share can white and black live together. We believe that such local black leaders as Fred Harris and Ronald Johnsom should be freed because they are political prisoners whose jail sentences are our society's reward for their brave and honest struggle.

4. The right to live for the youth of America.

-The draft should be abolished because it denies the right to live to young men and because it enables the power elite to carry on its militaristic adventures abroad and in our cities. Selective Service takes away from our young people the right to decide what they want to do with their lives.

-The poor quality of so much of our educational and medical care systems, the pollution of air and water, and the destruction of our cities by urban renewal -- all these conditions are destroying the future of young people. These conditions must be changed radically.

-America's young people deserve a voice in all decisions which affect their lives. We support the right of students to share in the control and decisions of their schools and colleges. We support the right of 18-year-olds to vote.

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A word about the Republican and Democratic candidates. AIM believes that the major parties have proven themselves to be corrupt, undemocratic and outworn institutions. The nominations of Nixon and Humphrey on the beaches of Miami and in the Chicago police state show that neither party offers the American people anything but platitudes and repression in this time of crisis.

The two other candidates for Congress in the Third District are as irrelevant as their parties to the politics and problems of today. Any Third District resident has a right to expect that these candidates would do their best, within the limitations of the office, to represent their constituents. Neither shows any promise.

The Republican nominee has shown no interest in public issues since he ran in 1966. Coming from a party that claims the ability to govern, this candidacy is an insult to the people of the Third District.

As for the Democrat in office, he has offered nothing but mediocrity. One minimum responsibility of a Congressman ought to be to make a strong effort to maintain a real dialogue with the people he supposedly represents. Aside from a pitiful little newsletter the taxpayers must pay to have mailed to themselves once a year, the Congressman's only "communication" is an occasional intemperate outburst about one of his constituents. The other minimum responsibility of a Congressman ought to be to vote for the interests of ordinary citizens. The present Congressman does just the opposite. He has voted to support the war in Vietnam while American deaths alone have climbed from under 4000 in September 1966 to almost 27,000 as of September 1968. He has cynically pushed for more and more defense contracts for our area, increasing the already dangerous imbalance of our local economy. He led the fight to defeat the Dickey-Lincoln public power project, which would save every New Englander many dollars in reduced utility rates. And he spends much of his energy in violent attacks on labor leaders, on leaders of the black community, and on the telephone bills of the local anti-poverty program (CPI).

A Congressman who thinks his major job is to cut "fat" from the federal budget is hardly adequate in the crisis which faces the American people. It is intolerable that a U.S. Representative in 1968 could say that "in the main, the U.S. has nothing to worry about."(New Haven Journal Courier, Feb. 23, 1968)

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For people who support a candidacy like this, there are several ways of actively participating. Perhaps the most important kind of work is to communicate the ideas and purposes of this campaign to the many, different people we meet from day to day. Beyond that, any campaign needs volunteers - to distribute printed leaflets and platforms, to do typing, addressing envelopes, telephoning and various types of publicity work. Of course, our campaign depends on the financial support of everyone who is sympathetic: telephones, printing, postage, transportation expenses for campaign workers, some media advertising and the rent and maintenance of the campaign office - all cost plenty of money. Your time and/or your contributions are very important and very appreciated.

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